

ENTRANCE TO LITTLE CHARLTON HOUSE, KENT.



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IN No. 146 of *THE BUILDER*, attached to the account of the fine decorated windows at East Sutton Church, the manor-house of Little Charlton is mentioned among those objects in the immediate vicinity of Maidstone, well deserving a visit from the architect, and some account likewise is given of the remains of Great Charlton. The old building, represented in the print, is a capital example of the architecture during the reign of Elizabeth, and it is moreover the work of an English architect,—the celebrated John Thorpe; and not only is the general effect good, but the details throughout are highly picturesque and pleasing. Several of the old buildings about Maidstone are in the same style or manner of construction. On a substructure of Kentish rag stone, the walls are carried up in red brick, with the dressings round the doors and windows, the

parapets, cornices, &c. of compo. In several of these buildings (those that are neglected), the compo has nearly disappeared.

The house at Little Charlton presents the usual most striking feature of old English architecture, the high collar-beam roof, with the attic windows in the side fronts standing up, each with a brick or stone gable, like the principal front. These roofs were often constructed without tie-beams, and the side walls are often seen bulging out at top through the pressure of the rafters, and the weight of the roof resting upon them. At Little Charlton the tie-beams are concealed in the floor of the attic story, and, indeed, form part of its construction. The house had been for many years used as a farm-house, and becoming very dilapidated, it underwent a general repair a few years since by the direction of Sir Edmund Filmer, Bart., M.P., to whom it belongs; large additions were then made to it. The builders on the

occasion were Messrs. Tassell and Bulmer, of Maidstone, by whom the work was done in an excellent manner.

The entrance-doorway, seen on the left in the print, is part of the additions made by Sir Edmund, by whom the old building has been turned into a noble residence.

According to the ancient design, the building was to have been three times larger; the gable shown in the print formed merely the right-hand portion of the front; a similar gable was on the left, and between them, in the centre, was a triple triangular entrance and window of such ingenious and complicated form that I cannot describe it. As the form of these projecting bays in ancient times was very varied, I may possibly at some future occasion give a few plans in illustration of them, and these should certainly include the old plan of the entrance to Little Charlton. The triangular window at this place is very picturesque;